

SLOPER, CHECKPOINT, TWOFOLD - AN UPDATE

Dave Hill

We seem to have lost track of Joseph Sloper's successors for the last 10 years but recently I came across them again. In 2000 an American company purchased the Checkpoint side and no longer wanted the more traditional parts of the business, including stamp perforating, remember Checkpoint made cheque-writing machines. Checkpoint's original founders then decided to take over those parts of the business no longer wanted by Checkpoint. The new company is called "Twofold" and is based in Reading. It markets a whole range of document handling equipment and software including mail inserters and frankers. Of interest to us are machines for cancelling by perforating, mainly travellers cheques, apparently written cancellations can be removed, nothing changes! The literature makes reference to experience dating back to 1858, when Joseph Sloper was granted his patent for cancelling by perforation. They still offer small hand perforating machines, we are not sure if they are suitable for stamps, but they are streamlined forms of bent up steel, not the old heavy cast iron things. They can still be adapted to perforate or emboss, like a company seal. With a range of business partners "Twofold" offer a complete service for commerce and industry.

Twofold tell me they still run the stamp perforating business, albeit on a reduced scale from Sloper's heyday, some 1.5 million stamps last year as against approx 130 million in 1906! They say the customers are mainly local authorities, health authorities and some commercial firms. One thought that had not occurred to me, Twofold thought the business was finished when Royal Mail introduced self adhesive stamps, it would not have been worthwhile to redesign the dies and presses to cater for these, but fortunately for Twofold and us Royal Mail still issue stamps in the traditional format.

So if you have a say in your companies mail and document handling you might like to try Twofold. On the other hand they may have a part in all those bills and tax demands you receive!

[Ed:- For members seeking more information Twofold can be contacted via their website www.twofold.co.uk or at 77 Milford Road, Reading, Berks RG1 8LG – Tel 0118 951 9800]